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ATTEMPT TO ABOLISH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE NORMAL SCHOOLS.

[We have been requested, by many of our subscribers and correspondents, to give some account, in the pages of this Journal, of the abortive attempt, made last winter, in the House of Representatives, to abolish the Board of Education and to break up the Normal Schools. We have also been requested to accompany the record of that proceeding with a suitable commentary. The documents and the evidence, pertaining to that movement, we are willing to publish ; but feel no disposition to make any animadversions upon them. The Board needs no vindication from the charges brought against it ; and, as to the imputations cast upon our own course of proceedings, we prefer to prove by our conduct, for the future, as we trust we have done, during the past, that they are wholly groundless.]

The Reports of the Committee will be found below ; and also the leading speech, on each side of the question. The speech of Mr. Dodge is taken from the Boston Daily Advertiser : it being the best report of that speech we have been able to find. The speech in defence of the Board and the Schools was made by the Hon. J. A. Shaw, the Preceptor of the Academy at Bridgewater, who, in addition to his many excellent qualities as a citizen and a man, has been, for many years, an experienced and successful teacher of youth.—Ed.]

House of Representatives, March 7th, 1840.

The Committee on Education having been directed, by an order of the House of the third instant, to consider the expediency of abolishing the Board of Education and the Normal Schools, and to report by bill or otherwise, have attended to that duty, and respectfully submit the following

REPORT :

In entering upon the duties intrusted to them, your Committee were fully aware of the difficulties with which it is encompassed. Their inquiry extends to the principles, operation, and probable effects of an institution, organized by a former Legislature, to promote the great interest of Common Schools. A period of nearly three years has elapsed, since the act of the Legislature which established the Board of Education ; two successive legislatures have acquiesced in its existence, and the three annual reports of the Board and their Secretary have borne strong testimony to its beneficial influence. Under these circumstances, for your Committee to give an opposite testimony might seem to savor of temerity,—not to say, of presumption. But your Committee, in the faithful performance of their duty, do not shrink from encountering this charge ;—they cannot allow themselves to be deterred from expressing the deliberate conclusions of their judgment, by the fear of this or any other imputation. Their apprehensions spring from a different source. An attempt may be made to identify the interests of Common Schools with the existence of the Board of Education ; and any objections to that Board may, perhaps, be regarded by some, as a covert assault upon our long-established system of public instruction. But, since our system of public schools did not owe its origin to the Board of Education, but was in existence for two centuries before that Board was established, a proposal to dispense with its further services cannot be reasonably considered as indicating any feelings of hostility or of indifference towards our system of Common Schools. It is, indeed, the attachment of your Committee to that

system, which has induced them to investigate, with care and attention, the tendencies of the Board of Education. And it is the conclusion to which they have arrived, that the operations of that Board are incompatible with those principles upon which our Common Schools have been founded and maintained, that leads them to make this Report.

The first question to be considered is, what is the power of the Board of Education? Upon this point, very great differences of opinion appear to prevail. By the terms of the Act, the Board seems to have only a power of recommending, but it is the opinion of many, that this power of recommendation, exercised by such a Board, must of necessity be soon converted into a power of regulation; and even if it were not, the vantage ground which such a Board occupies, must obviously give it, for all practical purposes, an equivalent power. One manifest means, by which this power of recommending measures may become, and, in several instances, has already become, equivalent to a power of regulation, is to be found in the circumstance, that the Legislature will naturally lend a ready ear to the suggestions of the Board, and will be apt, without much examination, to clothe with a legal sanction such rules and regulations, as the Board may recommend. It would thus appear, that the Board has a tendency, and a strong tendency, to engross to itself the entire regulation of our Common Schools, and practically to convert the Legislature into a mere instrument for carrying its plans into execution. If, however, this result should be disclaimed, and the Legislature is left as independent as before, and with the same feeling of responsibility for all enactments on the subject of schools, the Board seems to be useless; for the Legislature will not lack suggestions from a variety of other quarters, equally well adapted to furnish them. If, then, the Board has any actual power, it is a dangerous power, trenching directly upon the rights and duties of the Legislature; if it has no power, why continue its existence, at an annual expense to the Commonwealth?

As a mere organ for the collection and diffusion of information on the subject of education, the Board seems to your Committee to be, in several respects, very much inferior to those voluntary associations of teachers, which preceded the existence of the Board, and which, perhaps, suggested the idea of it. In these voluntary associations a vast number of persons are interested; a spirit of emulation exists; and each member is anxious to distinguish himself by his contributions to the common cause. Indeed, the Board of Education has found itself obliged to have recourse to these very associations, as a principal means for carrying out its plans. But it is obvious to your Committee, that conventions of teachers called by authority, and subjected to a foreign control, will not feel themselves free to act; they will not feel a due responsibility, and will not share the zeal and emulation to be expected in associations purely voluntary. As your Committee have already stated, these associations of teachers were in existence before the Board was established; and, from the best information your Committee have been able to obtain, instead of increasing, they have, in some places, declined in interest and utility, since they were taken under the patronage of the Board.

Considering the degree of interest which pervades this community, on the subject of education, and the large number of intelligent persons whose lives are devoted to that profession, your Committee do not apprehend that any discoveries, which may be made in the art or science of teaching, will remain undissemminated, through want of zeal to spread information, or of disposition to acquire it. Your Committee can well imagine that in a different state of society, such as is to be found in the newly-settled States,—where Common Schools are a novelty, and teachers are generally ill-qualified for their office, some artificial means, such as a Board of Education, might be useful, in stimulating a spirit of inquiry and in disseminating knowledge. But, among us, with so many accomplished teachers, a public Board, established for the benefit of the profession of teaching, seems as little needed as a public Board for the benefit of divinity, medicine, or the law. Undoubtedly, in all these professions, great improvements might be made; but it is better to leave them to private industry and free competition, than for the Legislature to put them under the superintendence of an official Board.

The true way to judge of the practical operations of the Board of Education is not merely to consult the statutes by which the Board is established, but also to examine its own reports. They will furnish an unquestionable means of discovering what are the objects, which the Board actually proposes for itself. A very cursory examination of these documents will suffice to show, that, so far from continuing our system of public instruction, upon the plan upon which it was founded, and according to which it has been so long and so successfully carried on, the aim of the Board appears to be, to remodel it altogether after the example of the French and Prussian systems.

These systems have a central Board, which supplies the ignorance and incapacity of the administrators of local affairs, and which models the schools of France and Prussia all upon one plan, as uniform and exact as the discipline of an army. On the other hand, our system of public instruction has proceeded upon the idea, that the local administrators of affairs, that is to say, the school committees of the several towns and

districts, are qualified to superintend the schools, and might best be trusted with that superintendence. This different method of operating is not confined to public schools, but extends to every other department of life. In France or Prussia, the smallest bridge cannot be built, or any village road repaired, until a central Board has been consulted, — a plan, which, in its practical operations, and notwithstanding the science of the central Board, and the skill of the engineers whom it has at command, is found not at all comparable with our system of local authority.

De Torqueville, whose work upon America has been so much admired, dwells at great length and with great emphasis, upon the advantages which New England derives from its excellent system of local authority ; while he points out the want of local public spirit in the countries of Europe, and the deficiency of interest in local affairs, as the greatest obstacle in the way of public improvements. This system of local authority is as beneficial to the schools, as to any thing else. It interests a vast number of people in their welfare, whose zeal and activity, if they find themselves likely to be overshadowed by the controlling power of a central Board, will be apt to grow faint. Improvements, which a teacher or school committee have themselves hit upon, will be likely to be pushed with much more spirit, than those which are suggested, or, as it were, commanded, by a foreign and distant power.

After all that has been said about the French and Prussian systems, they appear to your Committee to be much more admirable, as a means of political influence, and of strengthening the hands of the government, than as a mere means for the diffusion of knowledge. For the latter purpose, the system of public Common Schools, under the control of persons most interested in their flourishing condition, who pay taxes to support them, appears to your Committee much superior. The establishment of the Board of Education seems to be the commencement of a system of centralization and of monopoly of power in a few hands, contrary, in every respect, to the true spirit of our democratical institutions ; and which, unless speedily checked, may lead to unlooked-for and dangerous results.

As to the practical operation of this centralizing system, your Committee would observe, that some of the rules and regulations already devised by the Board of Education, and doubtless considered by it as of a very useful tendency, have proved, when carried into execution in the schools, very embarrassing, and have engrossed much of the time and attention of the teachers, which might better have been bestowed upon the instruction of their pupils, than in making out minute and complicated registers of statistics. The Board passes new regulations respecting the returns to be made out by the school committees, and sends forth its blanks ; the school committees are abruptly notified of them, without being informed of the reasons upon which they are founded. The rules and regulations become so numerous and complicated, as to be difficult of apprehension, as well as of execution. Indeed, a periodical commentary seems necessary, from the Secretary of the Board, in order to enable school committees to discharge their duties. Your Committee are strongly of opinion, that nothing but a prevailing impression, well or ill founded, that a compliance with the rules and regulations of the Board is necessary to secure to towns their annual share of the school fund, has enabled those rules and regulations to be at all regarded. The multiplicity and complexity of laws, with respect to any subject, are matter of just complaint ; and this is especially the case with respect to Common Schools, the teachers of which have a great variety of arduous duties, which must, of necessity, be performed, and which ought not to be aggravated by any requirements, not essential to the welfare of the schools. A central Board, the members of which are not practical teachers, will be easily led to imagine, that minute statistical facts and other like information, may be obtained at a much less expense of valuable time, than is actually needed for procuring them.

Your Committee have already stated, that the French and Prussian system of public schools appears to have been devised, more for the purpose of modifying the sentiments and opinions of the rising generation, according to a certain government standard, than as a mere means of diffusing elementary knowledge. Undoubtedly, Common Schools may be used as a potent means of engrafting into the minds of children, political, religious, and moral opinions ; — but, in a country like this, where such diversity of sentiments exists, especially upon theological subjects, and where morality is considered a part of religion, and is, to some extent, modified by sectarian views, the difficulty and danger of attempting to introduce these subjects into our schools, according to one fixed and settled plan, to be devised by a central Board, must be obvious. The right to mould the political, moral, and religious, opinions of his children, is a right exclusively and jealously reserved by our laws to every parent ; and for the government to attempt, directly or indirectly, as to these matters, to stand in the parent's place, is an undertaking of very questionable policy. Such an attempt cannot fail to excite a feeling of jealousy, with respect to our public schools, the results of which could not but be disastrous.

A prominent measure, already brought forward by the Board of Education, as a means

of moulding the sentiments of the rising generation, is the project of furnishing, under the sanction of the Board, a school library for each district in the Commonwealth. It is professed, indeed, that the matter selected for this library will be free both from sectarian and political objections. Unquestionably, the Board will endeavor to render it so. Since, however, religion and politics, in this free country, are so intimately connected with every other subject, the accomplishment of that object is utterly impossible, nor would it be desirable, if possible. That must, indeed, be an uninteresting course of reading, which would leave untouched either of these subjects; and he must be a heartless writer, who can treat religious or political subjects, without affording any indication of his political or religious opinions. Books, which confine themselves to the mere statement of undisputed propositions, whether in politics, religion, or morals, must be meager, indeed; nor is it possible to abstract, from treatises on these subjects, all that would give offence, without abstracting, at the same time, the whole substance of the matter. Mere abstract propositions are of very little interest: it is their practical application to particular cases, in which all readers, and especially young readers, are principally interested. It is not sufficient, and it ought not to be, that a book contains nothing which we believe to be false. If it omit to state what we believe to be true; if it founds itself upon vague generalities, which will equally serve the purpose of all reasoners, alike; this very omission to state what we believe to be the truth becomes, in our eyes, a fault of the most serious character. A book, upon politics, morals, or religion, containing no party or sectarian views, will be apt to contain no distinct views of any kind, and will be likely to leave the mind in a state of doubt and skepticism, much more to be deplored than any party or sectarian bias.

If a taste for reading exist in our Common Schools, considering the cheapness and multiplicity of books, and the vast number of pens devoted to the supply of intellectual wants, it cannot be doubted that, according to the ordinary rules of demand and supply, books adapted for the purpose of a school library will be furnished, as fast as they are needed; and out of the books, thus produced, every school committee would be at liberty to make a selection, adapted to the wants and wishes of their district. The question whether the public money should be appropriated, to aid the school districts in providing themselves with books, is a question as to which your Committee do not feel themselves called upon to express any opinion. That question, however, is very different from the question whether the Commonwealth shall aid, by an appropriation of the public money, and by lending its countenance and patronage, to give an artificial circulation to a particular set of books. Your Committee have no doubts as to the inexpediency of such a proceeding.

Another project, imitated from France and Prussia, and set on foot under the superintendence of the Board of Education, is the establishment of Normal schools. Your Committee approach this subject with some delicacy, inasmuch as one half the expense of the two Normal schools already established has been sustained by private munificence. If, however, no benefit, in proportion to the money spent, is derived from these schools, it is our duty, as legislators, in justice not only to the Commonwealth but to the private donor, to discontinue the project. Comparing the two Normal Schools already established with the academies and high schools of the Commonwealth, they do not appear to your Committee to present any peculiar or distinguishing advantages.

Academies and high schools cost the Commonwealth nothing; and they are fully adequate, in the opinion of your Committee, to furnish a competent supply of teachers. In years past, they have not only supplied our own schools with competent teachers, but have annually furnished hundreds to the West and the South. There is a high degree of competition existing between these academies, which is the best guaranty for excellence. It is insisted by the Board, however, that the art of teaching is a peculiar art, which is particularly and exclusively taught at Normal Schools; but it appears to your Committee, that every person, who has himself undergone a process of instruction, must acquire, by that very process, the art of instructing others. This certainly will be the case with every person of intelligence; if intelligence be wanting, no system of instruction can supply its place. An intelligent mechanic, who has learned his trade, is competent, by that very fact, to instruct others in it; and needs no Normal School to teach him the art of teaching his apprentices.

Considering that our district schools are kept, on an average, for only three or four months in the year, it is obviously impossible, and perhaps it is not desirable, that the business of keeping these schools should become a distinct and separate profession, which the establishment of Normal Schools seems to anticipate.

Even if these schools did furnish any peculiar and distinguishing advantages, we have no adequate security that the teachers, thus taught at the public expense, will remain in the Commonwealth; and it seems hardly just that Massachusetts, in the present state of her finances, should be called upon to educate, at her own cost, teachers for the rest of the Union.

If it be true, that the teachers of any of our district schools are insufficiently quali-

fied for the task, the difficulty originates, as it appears to your Committee, not in any deficiency of the means of obtaining ample qualifications, but in insufficiency of compensation. Those districts, which are inclined to pay competent wages, can at all times be supplied with competent teachers; and the want of means or inclination to pay an adequate salary is not a want which Normal Schools have any tendency to supply.

From the number of scholars who have hitherto attended the Normal Schools, established by the Board of Education, it does not appear that any want of such institutions is seriously felt. The number of pupils falls far short of the average number in our academies and high schools.

It may be suggested, that to abolish these Normal Schools, when they have been in operation for so short a time, is not to give the experiment a fair trial. But the objections of your Committee, as will appear from the considerations above submitted, are of a general and fundamental nature; and they do not consider it advisable to persevere in an experiment, of the inutility of which they are perfectly satisfied. In fact, these schools do not appear to your Committee to have any stronger claims on the public treasury, for an appropriation of two thousand dollars a year, than many of our academies and high schools.

Should the Normal Schools be discontinued by the Legislature, it is but just and reasonable, in the opinion of your Committee, that the sums, advanced by the individual who has generously contributed to the support of those schools, should be refunded; which might be done, by an appropriation of probably five or six hundred dollars, in addition to the money not yet expended, in the hands of the treasurer of the fund.

The Secretary of the Board of Education stated, in his argument before your Committee on the subject of Normal Schools, that engagements with the teachers of those schools and other parties interested, had been entered into for a term of three years; and he argued, that it would be improper for the Legislature to disturb these contracts. With respect to these contracts, your Committee are decidedly of opinion, that they ought never to have been made, except with the express understanding of a liability to be rescinded or modified, at the pleasure of the Legislature. If, however, they have been otherwise made, and if any individuals shall appear to have any reasonable claim to be remunerated for any disappointment, occasioned by discontinuing the schools, the Legislature have the power to make such remuneration; and your Committee believe, that the sooner such a settlement is made, the better,—inasmuch as an increase in the number of the schools, as contemplated by the Board, would increase the difficulty and cost of such a settlement.

In conclusion, the idea of the State controlling Education, whether by establishing a central Board, by allowing that Board to sanction a particular Library, or by organizing Normal Schools, seems to your Committee a great departure from the uniform spirit of our institutions,—a dangerous precedent, and an interference with a matter more properly belonging to those hands, to which our ancestors wisely intrusted it. It is greatly to be feared, that any attempt, to form all our schools and all our teachers upon one model, would destroy all competition, all emulation, and even the spirit of improvement itself. When a large number of teachers and school committees are all aiming at improvement, as is doubtless the case, to a great extent, in this Commonwealth, improvements seem much more likely to be found out and carried into practice, than when the chief right of experimenting is vested in a central Board.

With these views, your Committee have come to the conclusion, that the interests of our Common Schools would rest upon a safer and more solid foundation, if the Board of Education and the Normal Schools were abolished. Your Committee would therefore recommend the passage of the following bill.

For the Committee,

ALLEN W. DODGE.

AN ACT TO ABOLISH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SEC. 1. The Board of Education and the office of Secretary to the Board of Education are hereby abolished; and the act passed April 20, 1837, entitled 'an Act relating to Common Schools,' is hereby repealed.

SEC. 2. The act passed March 31, 1838, entitled 'an Act to defray the expenses of the Board of Education,' and also the act passed April 21, 1838, entitled 'an Act to prescribe the duties and fix the compensation of the Secretary of the Board of Education,' are hereby repealed.

SEC. 3. So much of the first section of the act passed April 13, 1838, entitled 'an Act concerning Schools,' as requires that copies of the annual reports, made by school

committees to the towns, shall be sent to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, and also the fifth, sixth, and seventh, sections of the said act, are hereby repealed.

SEC. 4. The resolves passed April 19, 1838, entitled 'Resolves relative to qualifying teachers for Common Schools,' and the act passed March 26, 1839, entitled 'an Act to incorporate the Trustees of the Plymouth County Normal School,' are hereby repealed.

SEC. 5. So much of the third section of the act passed March 18, 1839, entitled 'an Act concerning Schools,' as authorizes the Board of Education to prescribe the time when the school committees of the several towns shall make their annual returns to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, is hereby repealed, and said returns shall be made on or before the fifteenth day of November, annually.

SEC. 6. So much money as shall remain in the hands of the treasurer of the Normal School fund, after defraying the expenses that may be incurred up to the close of the current terms of the said schools, respectively, shall be paid over to the Honorable Edmund Dwight; and for so much additional money as may be necessary to make up the sum heretofore contributed by the said Dwight to the said fund, His Excellency the Governor is hereby authorized to draw his warrant in favor of the said Dwight, to be paid out of any moneys in the treasury of the Commonwealth, not otherwise appropriated.

MINORITY REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

House of Representatives, March 11, 1840.

The undersigned, a minority of the Committee on Education, to whom was referred an order of the third instant, instructing them to inquire into the expediency of abolishing the Board of Education and the Normal Schools, —not concurring either in the conclusions to which the majority of said Committee have come, nor in the course of reasoning which has led to them,—respectfully ask leave to submit a

MINORITY REPORT.

As the undersigned were not allowed by the House the opportunity of examining the Report of the majority,—except at the Clerk's table, and amid the bustle of business,—they hope to be excused for any mistake into which they may fall, respecting its contents. As the positions of the Report seemed to them erroneous, they were anxious, before attempting a reply, to obtain a better knowledge of this document, than they could be expected to possess, from only hearing it read.

The undersigned, presuming that every member of the House feels a lively interest in the cause of popular education, and in the welfare of our Common Schools, cannot suppose that the Representatives of the people are willing to arrest any measures which are designed for the intellectual elevation of the whole community. This Legislature certainly will not prevent the fair trial of any plan, recently devised by their predecessors, for the benefit of our Common Schools.

The majority of our Committee do not specify a single instance, so far as we can recollect, in which the Board of Education have attempted to control, or in any way to interfere with, the rights of towns or school districts. They seem to be in great fear of *imaginary* evils; but are not able to produce a single fact, to justify their apprehensions. It is the alleged tendencies of the Board, to which they object. There is a possibility, they think, of its doing wrong; of its usurping powers which would endanger freedom of thought.

If every institution is to be abolished, which it is possible to pervert to some evil purpose, we beg leave to ask, what one would be left? In all human affairs, the possibility to do wrong goes with the power to do right. Take away the power of doing wrong, and the power of doing right will be destroyed, at the same time. Judging from what the Board have hitherto done, we find it as difficult to foresee wherein they are likely to interfere with the rights of towns, districts, or any thing else, as the majority of the Committee do, to tell wherein they have already done it.

The Board of Education consists, as we believe, of upright and intelligent men, who stand high in the esteem and confidence of the community. It is well known, that they are of different parties, in politics, and that they also differ in sentiment, on religious subjects. Entire unanimity exists among them but upon one point, that of the welfare of the rising generation, through the improvement of our public schools. If these men are worthy of confidence, as individuals, much more so are they, when taken collectively; for, when acting together, as a Board, they are a mutual watch and check upon each other's sectarian or party preferences. This very organization of the Board is the surest defence that can be devised against such dangerous tendencies, as seem to alarm a ma-

majority of our Committee. We think it will be quite time enough to suspect a conspiracy against our political and religious rights, when the suspected persons are bound together by some tie of a common interest. In such a body as the Board, there is more danger that action will be paralyzed, than that it will encroach upon the rights or welfare of the public.

What motive, we would ask, except the noble one of doing good, can any man have to become a member of the Board of Education? They receive no compensation for their services, nothing being paid them but their actual expenses, the amount of which is but a few hundred dollars; and owing to the labor which is required by a new undertaking, and to the duties imposed on them by the Legislature, in regard to the fund for the education of teachers, the members of the Board have, we are informed, spent on an average not less than the third of a year in its service. For this they receive no compensation but the consciousness of doing good. Their Secretary receives a salary; but we are informed that it has not been sufficient to defray his travelling expenses, and other charges connected with his office. What inducement can there be for occupying such stations as these, except a desire to promote the best interests of the rising generation? And, nevertheless, a Board of ten men, thus constituted, with no power but that of giving advice, with no emolument but their daily bread while in actual service, is, in the estimation of some persons, a combination dangerous, not only to the liberties of the people, but to the free action of their representatives! As to the suggestion in the majority's Report that the Legislature will be always ready to sanction whatever the Board may recommend, and merely because they recommend it, we deem it disrespectful to the intelligence and independence of this body.

The majority of the Committee say, that either the Board has power, and then it is dangerous; or that it has no power, and then it is useless. This argument seems to be modelled according to the reasoning of the Saracen Caliph, when he had in hand a similar work of destruction; not, it is true, the destruction of a Board of Education and two or three Normal Schools, but a kindred operation,—the burning of the most famous library of ancient times. “If these books contain nothing but what is found in the Koran, they are useless, and ought to be burnt;—if they contain any thing different from the Koran, they are pernicious, and ought to be burnt.” But we would ask, with all due soberness, whether the Board cannot give their advice, whether they cannot submit their arguments and their views to their fellow-citizens, without any aggression upon their rights, and still with great advantage? Take a single case. It is well known to every one who ever went to a common public school, that a very large proportion of the school-houses in this State have not been, in times past, what they ought to be. In very many instances they have been cold, cheerless, badly constructed and situated, and much in need of repair; unfit either for study or health. Parents have often kept their children at home, rather than send them to such a place. During the first year of the Board a report on the subject of schoolhouses was prepared and published by their Secretary. That report has probably caused the rebuilding or remodelling of hundreds of school-houses in the State. It has been widely circulated in this country, reprinted in England, and commended in the English journals. Now, in respect to this subject of schoolhouses, the Board have exercised no control. Every district has followed its own inclination, in building its new house, or repairing its old one. This is one instance of their effecting much good, without exerting any control, or attempting any interference. Similar remarks might be offered, in respect to the salutary influence which one of these reports has had upon the art of reading, in our Common Schools. Its suggestions did much to correct the habit of unintelligent reading, the habit of naming words without having ideas connected with them, which was a few years since a very common fault. This was done without any assumption of authority; and so may much more be done, in relation to all the great subjects of education.

It is somewhere suggested in the Report of the majority, that certain voluntary associations of teachers, which existed before the formation of the Board, would be more efficient than the Board, in collecting and diffusing information on the subject of Common-School instruction. This opinion we think is erroneous. At the time the Board was established, there were, as we believe, but three such associations in the State, and they having but few members. Two of the associations immediately sought the coöperation of the Board, and have acted with it, on equal terms; and we deem the insinuation unjust to all the parties, that these institutions have been subjected to foreign control.

As the majority approve of these voluntary associations, it may be well to inquire, what effect has been produced, so far as they are concerned, by the establishment of the Board. County associations for the improvement of Common Schools have, since that time, been formed in every county of the State, except one. More than fifty county conventions have been held, many of them being fully attended by school-committee men, teachers, and others interested in the great cause of Common-School education. More Common-School conventions have been held in any one year, since the establishment of the Board, than for twenty years before. It is hardly necessary to say, that there

was no coercion in producing these movements,—that the Board exercised no control. At one of these conventions, held in Worcester, in 1838, a committee was appointed to have lectures delivered in every town in the county. Similar measures have been adopted, to some extent, in other counties. The efficiency, therefore, of the very mode, approved by the majority, has been increased by the action of the Board, and this not by control, but by advice.

The American Institute of Instruction, which stands far above all other associations, formed for the aid of popular education, at their annual meeting, in 1837, passed the following Resolve :

“ *Resolved*, That the American Institute of Instruction congratulate the friends of education in our country, upon the establishment of the Board of Education in this Commonwealth, whose coöperation in the cause in which this Institution is engaged, is a strong guaranty of its ultimate success and triumph.”

The Institute has, every year, requested that arrangements might be made for the holding of a county convention, at the same time and place of their annual meeting ; and it is known to every person, who is at all conversant with what has been done within a few years, relative to popular education, that the Secretary of the Board is expected to address these annual conventions. The American Institute and all other similar associations, as far as we are informed, have ever exhibited towards the Board and its measures, the spirit manifested in the resolve just quoted.

The allegation, that the Board are attempting to fasten upon our schools the compulsory system of Prussia or France, is an extraordinary one. They say, if our recollection be correct, that evidence of this is to be found in the reports of the Board. Having read these reports as they were published, from time to time, we will confidently say, we do not believe that the majority of our Committee, or any one else, can point out a single word which would show that the Board possesses or desires any authoritative control over our school system. So far is this charge from being true, that the reports expressly disclaim all interference. In the last two reports of the Secretary, he points out the difference between the Prussian system, which is arbitrary, and the Massachusetts, which is voluntary, much to the advantage of the latter. We need only refer to the twenty-eighth page of his second Report, and the thirty-sixth page of his third. Though the undersigned wish to correct so great a mistake, they do *not* wish to make the least intimation, that any improvement is to be rejected, merely because it originated in Prussia or any other foreign land. Such a narrow prejudice would shut out a thousand blessings. Where did the noble art of teaching the blind originate ? In France. The accomplished director of the Institution for the Blind, in this city, visited England, France, and Prussia, the better to qualify himself to take charge of it. Whence came the sister art of teaching the deaf and dumb ? That also came from France. What would be thought of a man who should propose to abolish these or any other reliefs to suffering humanity, because they were not of American origin ?

In the Revolutionary War, our fathers had no hesitation in borrowing their system of military tactics from Prussia ; but to take any instruction from the same quarter, when searching for the best modes of advancing public education, some persons seem to think, is fraught with danger. The State of Ohio, a few years since, with an enlightened liberality, commissioned the Rev. Dr. Stowe to examine, while in Prussia, its school system. On his return, he made a report to the Legislature of that State, which was afterwards republished by our own Legislature. Let any one examine that report, and he will have no further fears on this subject.

An enlightened community would disdain the contracted view that forbids men to look abroad for improvement. Have not commissioners from Great Britain, France, and this same Prussia, been sent out by their governments to examine our institutions, especially our prisons ? Would that the same especial honor could have been shown to our schools ! The majority of our Committee even quote one of these foreign commissioners, De Tocqueville, in support of their argument.

Though our system of free schools is properly called a voluntary system, yet there have always been laws to regulate and uphold it. And we can just as easily have a Board of Education without the centralization of Prussia, as we can have school laws without its despotism. The existing laws threaten us with despotism, just as much as a Board of Education, with no power but the power of giving advice, threatens us with centralization, monopoly, and mental tyranny. That it possesses any other power in regard to schoolhouses, taxes, teachers, books, or modes of instruction, as some have incorrectly supposed, we here explicitly deny. So careful has the Board been, not to assume any questionable power, that, although the school committees of more than seven eighths of the people of the State requested them to recommend, not prescribe, what school books were best fitted for general use,—the Board declined to act, even so far as to recommend.

Another objection is, that the Board abruptly sends out new regulations respecting school returns, and gives school committees needless trouble. That the House may

know the extent of this offence, we have annexed to this Report two copies of said blank returns, one for the year 1837, which was the form prescribed by law, and in existence before the Board was established, and the other for 1839, as directed by the Board, after the Legislature had authorized them to do so.* When any one sees the slight difference between them, he will be able to appreciate the weight of this objection; and even a part of this slight difference was caused by intermediate legislation.

It is also said that the blanks sent out by the Secretary of the Board are so unintelligible, that he is obliged to send along with them an explanatory commentary. Of this charge, it is only necessary to say, that similar explanations, by notes a line or two long, were formerly made by the Secretary of State, while it was his duty to superintend the blanks, years before a Board of Education was thought of.

As it respects the school register, your Committee were informed, a few days since, by the Secretary of the Board, that before the first form of register was sent out, many persons were consulted, especially teachers, as to what would be the best form. Manuscript copies were sent for the same purpose, into all parts of the State. He informed the Committee, that, the next year, there were as many school committees who desired to have it include more items, as there were who thought it too minute. To meet the wishes of the latter class, it was immediately altered, and since that time no complaint has been heard. This is the amount of troublesome interference, so far as the register is concerned; and this statement was made by the Secretary, when, we believe, all our Committee, with one exception, were present.

The majority, when speaking of school libraries, maintain, as well as we can recollect, that books on politics, morals, or religion, can be of no value, unless they are to some extent of a partisan or sectarian character; and consequently, that the books which have lately been introduced to the notice of the public, at the expense of much care and labor, on the part of the Board, are either worthless, or, on the other hand, not free from such peculiarities as the Board pretend to avoid. But let us test the accuracy of this reasoning by applying it to one of these books, by way of example, namely, Paley's Natural Theology. This is well known to be one of the soundest treatises ever written; and yet it has been well said of it, that no one could tell whether its author were orthodox or heterodox, churchman or dissenter. The same can be said of the several authors who have made additions to it.

If this doctrine be true, what would become of our school law? The seventh section of that law, enacted in 1826, commands all instructors of youth to teach them the principles of piety, justice, and a sound regard to truth, love to their country, humanity, &c.; and the twenty-third section forbids the use of any book inculcating the tenets of any particular sect of Christians. Here, piety is to be taught, and nevertheless sectarianism is forbidden;—a thing which the majority seem to consider morally impossible! In this connection, we will quote a sentence or two from Professor Stowe: "I pity the poor bigot," says he, "or the narrow-souled unbeliever, who can form no idea of religious principle, except as a sectarian thing; who is himself so utterly unsusceptible of ennobling emotions, that he cannot even conceive it possible that any man should have a principle of virtue and piety superior to all external forms, and untrammelled by metaphysical systems. From the aid of such men we have nothing to hope, in the cause of sound education; and their hostility we may as well encounter in one form as another, provided we make sure of the ground on which we stand, and hold up the right principles in the right shape."

On the subject of the Normal Schools, the undersigned feel obliged to enter into some details. By the donation of an individual, and a public grant to an equal amount, the sum of twenty thousand dollars was placed at the disposal of the Board, subject to only one condition, that it should be expended in qualifying teachers for our Common Schools. By the very terms, both of the private gift and the public grant, they were to have the entire control of it, as to the time and manner in which it should be expended, the number of schools, course of study, &c. The Report of the Board in 1839, informed the public of the course proposed. Three schools, at least, were to be established, for three years, each, in different parts of the State. As the money was not sufficient to provide for buildings, the Board made known that they would establish them at suitable places, as soon as they should receive the requisite assistance. Citizens from the county of Plymouth, and from several towns in other parts of the State, came forward with their offers. That from Plymouth county was among the first. When the citizens of that county inquired of the Board, on what terms they would establish a school within its limits, they passed the following resolve: "*Resolved*, That this Board will establish a school for the education of school teachers, at a point to be hereafter selected, within the county of Plymouth, and provide suitable teachers therefor, for a time not less than three years, so soon as suitable buildings, fixtures, and furniture, and the means of carrying on the school, (exclusive of the compensation of teachers,) shall be provided and placed under the control of the Board."

* See Appendix A.

Proposals substantially alike being made by many towns in different parts of the State, the Board selected Lexington and Barre as the most eligible places for the two other schools. The citizens of Lexington procured a lease and placed at the disposal of the Board a good academical building and boarding-house, for the term of three years, and raised by contribution the sum of a thousand dollars, to be expended in library, apparatus, &c., for the benefit of the school. The Board leased the boarding-house for the accommodation of pupils. They engaged Cyrus Pierce, Esq., then the teacher of a public school in Nantucket, where he was receiving fourteen hundred dollars a year, to become Principal of this school. Mr. Pierce left Nantucket, at a pecuniary loss, and removed with his family to Lexington. The school has been open, about eight months. Two letters from distinguished teachers, annexed to this Report, will show what we believe to be its true character.*

The town of Barre voted to offer the Board, for the term of three years, a spacious apartment in its town hall; and individuals raised by subscription fourteen hundred dollars, to pay the rent of a boarding-house, for three years, to purchase library, apparatus, &c. The boarding-house has been let, for the term of three years, for the accommodation of the school. The Rev. Professor Newman, of Bowdoin College, Maine, and for several years acting President of that institution, was engaged as Principal. He has disposed of his property in Maine, and removed with his family to Barre. The school has been open, six months.

The friends of Common-School education in Plymouth county, with a spirit worthy the descendants of the pilgrims, projected their plan on a still more liberal scale. Towns in their corporate capacity, and private individuals, have together contributed the sum of ten thousand dollars, for the erection of buildings, and other necessary expenses. An act of incorporation was given them, last winter, upon the faith of which they have thus far proceeded. A committee of gentlemen, residing out of the county, had already agreed on a day for going thither and selecting a site for the school, when the Report of our Committee was made.

The majority of our Committee propose, in one short bill, to violate all these contracts,—to break their faith with the generous donor of ten thousand dollars, to turn out the boarding-house keepers, to disperse the pupils, and discharge the teachers of the schools, and to annul a charter under which, at much expense and labor, the sum of ten thousand dollars has been raised.

For a period of two hundred years preceding the liberal donation of Mr. Dwight, nothing was given by wealthy individuals, so far as we can learn, for the general benefit of the Common Schools of our State. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been given to colleges. Academies have been liberally endowed. But, before this donation, the bounty of the rich had never been expended for the benefit of the whole people; and this first sum ever given to promote the great cause of common education, it is now proposed to treat with contempt, and cast back into the face of the generous donor. Let this benefaction be thus contemned, and far distant is the day when any one else will expose himself to be treated in a similar way.

The Committee speak of our Normal Schools as possessing no advantages for qualifying teachers, above what are possessed by our academies and high schools. We cannot suppose that they have formed this opinion from having visited them. The two letters, before referred to, contain the opinions of men who speak that which they know. With their testimony before the public, it is not necessary for us to enlarge on this subject.

Whatever objection any one might have had to the establishment of the Board and the Normal Schools, originally, yet, since they have been created and organized, it seems but right that they should have a fair trial. Let the experiment be tried, and not broken off as soon as begun. It has not yet had that trial. A change in public sentiment cannot be effected at once. Any new proposition, however valuable, may meet with opposition, at first. If the Board and Normal Schools are abolished now, they cannot be said to have failed. They will have fallen, prematurely, by the hand which should have sustained them. Men who desire to see the whole people educated in the manner that the citizens of a free republic ought to be, that rational and immortal beings ought to be, will not be satisfied, until measures, which they deem important to effect their favorite object, have been fairly tested.

The undersigned would not have extended these remarks to so great a length, were they not deeply impressed with the importance of the subject to which they relate. We only ask of the Legislature a dispassionate consideration of the subject before us. We only ask, that they will not disappoint the cherished hopes of those who are laboring in the great and good work of the intellectual and moral improvement of man.

JOHN A. SHAW.
THOS. A. GREENE.

* See Appendix B.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

FORM FOR 1837.

INQUIRIES TO BE ANSWERED IN RESPECT TO EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT IN
THE TOWN OF ———

Districts numbered, or names of the Schools.

Number of Scholars of all ages in each Common School. In the Summer,—in the Winter.

Average attendance in the several Schools. In the Summer,—In the Winter.

The number of months each School is kept. In the Summer term,—In the Winter term.

Number of Teachers in each School in Summer. Males,—Females.

Number of Teachers in each School in Winter. Males,—Females.

Wages paid per month, including board. To Males,—To Females.

INQUIRIES WITH RESPECT TO ALL THE SCHOOLS IN THE TOWN OF ———

What amount of money is raised by taxes for the support of Schools?

What amount of the money raised by taxes is paid for teachers' wages ; including the sums paid for the board of teachers, when paid from the public money ?

What amount is raised by voluntary contribution, and applied to prolong Common Schools ; including the value of fuel and board, if contributed ?

Are there any academies or private schools ? If any, what number of months is each kept ? And what is the average number of scholars attending each ?

What is the estimated amount paid for tuition in academies and private schools kept in the town ?

What number of persons are there in the town between the ages of four and sixteen years ?

What books are chiefly used for the purpose of instruction in spelling, reading, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, algebra, and geometry ?

Are there any local funds for the support of common schools ? If any, what is their amount, and what their annual income ?

} *School Committee.*

In addition to the answers to the questions above proposed, it is required in the twenty-third chapter of the Revised Statutes, that the School Committee shall transmit the following Certificate to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, on or before the first day of November, namely :

WE, the School Committee of ———, do certify, from the best information we have been able to obtain, that, on the first day of May, in the year ———, there were belonging to said town, the number of ——— persons between the ages of four and sixteen years ; and we further certify, that said town, at their last annual meeting, raised the sum of ——— dollars, to pay the wages of Instructors solely, in the Common Schools for the current year.

} *School Committee.*

— ss.
On this — day of — personally appeared the above-named School Committee of the Town of —, and made oath that the above Certificate by them subscribed is true.
Before me, *Justice of the Peace.*

(FORM FOR 1839.)

INQUIRIES TO BE ANSWERED IN RESPECT TO EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE
TOWN OF ———

Districts numbered, or names of the Schools.

Number of Scholars of all ages in each Common School. In the Summer,—In the Winter.

Average attendance in the several Schools. In the Summer,—In the Winter.

The number of months each School is kept. Summer Term.—Winter Term.

Number of Teachers in each School in Summer. Males,—Females.

Number of Teachers in each School in Winter. Males,—Females.

Wages per month, including value of board. Males,—Females.

Value of board per month. Males,—Females.

Amount of Wages per month, exclusive of value of board. Males,—Females.

INQUIRIES WITH RESPECT TO ALL THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE TOWN OF —

What amount of money is raised by taxes for the support of schools, including only teachers' wages, board and fuel?

Of what value are the board and fuel, (if any,) contributed for the public schools in your town?

Are there any incorporated academies? If any, what number of months is each kept?

And what is the average number of scholars attending each?

What is the estimated amount of money paid for tuition in incorporated academies kept in the town?

Are there any unincorporated academies, private schools, or schools kept to prolong Common Schools? If so, what number of months is each kept, what is the average number of scholars attending each, and what is the amount of money paid for tuition therein?

What number of persons are there in the town between the ages of four and sixteen years?

What books are used in your schools? Spelling —, Reading —, Grammar —, Geography —, Arithmetic —, All others —. Are there any local funds for the support of Common Schools? If any, what is their amount and what their annual income?

} *School Committee.*

WE, the School Committee of —, do certify, from the best information we have been able to obtain, that, on the first day of May, in the year —, there were belonging to said town the number of — persons, between the ages of four and sixteen years; and we further certify, that said Town has raised the sum of — dollars, for the support of Common Schools for the current year, including only the wages and board of Teachers, and fuel for the schools.

} *School Committee.*

— ss.

On this — day of —, personally appeared the above-named School Committee of the Town of —, and made oath that the above Certificate by them subscribed is true.

Before me,

Justice of the Peace.

(B.)

Letter from GEORGE B. EMERSON, ESQ., formerly Principal of the Boston High School, and now Teacher of a School for Young Ladies.

Boston, March 9, 1840.

DEAR SIR,—I very much regretted that you could not have joined us in the visit, to which you refer, in your note of this morning, to the Normal School at Lexington. I spent the day with more pleasure than I ever before received from a similar examination.

I had, as you know, high expectations of the effect of special instruction, in the preparation of teachers. But what I saw far surpassed what I had expected. The kind of instruction given as to the preparation to be made by a teacher, the branches to be taught, the methods of teaching, and the modes of influencing and governing pupils, were such as might have been expected from a long, enlightened, and well-directed experience. But the facility, with which these were communicated, surprised me, and the interest in the pursuit, which I found to have been excited, was such as I never before witnessed.

The establishment consists of two departments, the proper Normal School, made up of the future teachers, and the Model School, containing children from the neighborhood, to be instructed according to the most approved methods.

In the former, there were about twenty-four young ladies, of from sixteen to twenty-four years of age, coming from almost as many different schools, and having therefore experience of almost as many different modes of teaching and governing. This School had been in operation, but little more than half a year, and several of the young ladies had been there, only a few weeks. Yet I am confident, from what I saw of their modes of teaching, that those individuals will show the effects of those few weeks of special

instruction, all the remainder of their lives. They can never teach in the blind and lifeless way in which thousands of elementary schools are taught.

And, if the spirit which I saw exhibited may be taken as an indication of the influence which would be exerted in a longer course, I will say, without hesitation, that so amply qualified teachers are not now to be found in the elementary schools of the State, as would be formed, among the individuals now at the School, by a full course of instruction, such as is designed.

In the Normal School, the object seemed to be,—for I have had no opportunity of learning what *are* the intentions of the Principal,—first, to give great thoroughness in those branches which are of the greatest importance in the common elementary schools, such as Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, &c.; next, to add those studies which would give an acquaintance with the minds and characters of children, just as, in an agricultural school, we should expect to see communicated an acquaintance with plants, and the nature of soils; and, lastly, to give some knowledge of those principles of science on which children are most inquisitive, and with which, therefore, a well-qualified teacher's mind should be amply stored.

These all were admirably-well taught; and, what was still better, the pupils seemed to have imbibed, in a most remarkable degree, the zeal and earnestness which are so essential to success in a teacher, and which yet are so uncommon. This was evidenced, by the readiness of their answers, the clearness of their explanations, and the interest with which they engaged in the discussions, and still more by the life that had been communicated to the Model School below.

In this latter, which may be considered as the test of the success with which the operations of the upper School are managed, I listened, with still greater interest, to the manner in which questions were put and answered, the object of which was to excite the attention of the children to the meaning of what they were reading. There was nothing of the listlessness of manner and monotony of tone, which are so often observed, and often so inevitable, in Common Schools. The same was observable in the answers given to questions on the elements of geography, and on grammar; very thorough instruction had evidently been given. The children had been made clearly to comprehend what they had been taught. Yet they occasionally made mistakes; enough to show that their own minds were at work, and, of course, sometimes going wrong.

In this School, the great objects in view seemed to be, to ascertain and impart the best modes of teaching the art of reading intelligently, distinctly, and naturally; of communicating the elements of grammar, arithmetic, and geography; of bringing the mind into complete and cheerful activity, in making these acquisitions; of acquiring the art of governing, by gentleness, and without resort to violence; and of imparting the love of order, quiet, and regularity. In all these respects, the success had already been signal.

The Model School is only under the general superintendence of the master. For the greater part of the time it is left to the care of the young ladies, who all have the charge of it, in turn. I have never before seen little children so completely under the right influence of their teachers,—so fully awake; I never saw so little of mere mechanical teaching, or greater activity of the faculties of the mind.

I have mentioned some of the advantages of continuing this process of preparing teachers. It would be easy to enlarge upon them.

Great benefits have been experienced from meetings of teachers for mutual consultation. The Normal School has all the advantages of a continued meeting, with the opportunity of testing, at once, all suggestions made.

It is usually the case, that a teacher is familiarly acquainted with only one mode of managing a school. This may be a bad one. Others may suggest themselves to him; but it would be altogether impracticable for him to test their excellence. But in the Normal School he has an opportunity of becoming acquainted with a great variety of methods, and taking from among them that which he most approves.

I can hardly express to you the great satisfaction which I derived from this visit. The only draw-back was an apprehension, lest, from the entire devotion of the teacher, and the intense interest excited in the pupils, the health of both should suffer.

If there is any danger that this most valuable establishment should be discontinued, I would recommend to you to take the earliest opportunity to make it a visit, or you will lose a pleasure which may not again be presented.

I am very truly yours,

GEORGE B. EMERSON.

To THOMAS A. GREENE, Esq.

Letter from DR. SAMUEL G. HOWE, Director of the Institution for the Blind, at South Boston.

South Boston, March 9, 1840.

MR. GREENE,

SIR,—I have received your note, in which you ask my opinion of the Normal School at Lexington, and I cheerfully comply with your request.

I can express my opinion the more confidently, because I have more than once visited the School ; because I have examined the pupils, in their various branches of study ; and because I have had other opportunities of knowing the principles of the system of instruction.

In common with others, I entertained some theoretical objections to Normal Schools, as carried on by European governments, for I have personally witnessed the serious abuses to which they are subject, in Prussia ; but none of those objections can apply to the establishment at Lexington.

It has been in my power to examine many schools, in this country, and in various parts of the world ; but I am free to declare, that, in my opinion, the best school I ever saw, in this or any other country, is the Normal School at Lexington.

The discipline of the School is perfect ; the pupils regard their teacher with profound respect, yet tender affection ; their interest in their studies is deep and constant ; their attainments are of a high order ; and they thoroughly *understand* every subject, as far as they go.

But not for these things do I give this School the preference ; for others in this country and in Europe may equal it, in these respects ; but I prefer it, because the system of instruction is truly philosophical ; because it is based upon the principle that the young mind hungers and thirsts for knowledge, as the body does for food ; because it makes the pupils not merely recipients of knowledge, but calls all their faculties into operation to *attain it themselves* ; and finally, because, relying upon the higher and nobler parts of the pupil's nature, it rejects all addresses to bodily fears, and all appeals to selfish feelings.

I have said, sir, that the pupils were thoroughly acquainted with the various branches of an English education, as far as they advanced in them, and that they bore well a very severe examination. But this is faint praise ; for a teacher may cause a class to make very great *intellectual* attainments, by pursuing a system which, nevertheless, is ruinous to the moral nature of his pupils. But, at the Lexington School, the moral nature is as much cultivated as the intellectual, and the training of each goes on at the same time.

There is one point of view, however, in which this School particularly interested me, and in which it presented a beautiful moral spectacle, the memory of which will dwell long in my mind ; it was the fact, that every pupil seemed impressed with a deep sense of the importance of the calling which she was to follow ; they seemed to feel that at least the temporal weal or woe of hundreds of human beings might be dependent upon the fidelity with which they should perform their duty as teachers. Consequently, every one was desirous of becoming acquainted with the philosophy of mind ; and they received such excellent instruction, that they seemed to understand the various springs and incentives to action, which exist in a child's bosom.

To me, sir, it was delightful, to see that they were becoming acquainted with the nature of the children's mind, *before* they undertook to manage them ; and that they would not, like other teachers, have to learn, at the children's expense.

Perhaps, sir, you, like myself, may have *suffered*, in boyhood, under some usher, who was learning his trade by experimenting upon you, as the barber's apprentice learns to shave, upon the chins of his master's less favored customers ; and if you have ever been a teacher, you may look back with bitter regret upon the course you followed, during the first years of your practice.

Some of the very best teachers, I have ever known, have confessed, that, when they commenced, they had no more idea of the real nature of their employment, than a cabin boy has of navigation. Would not the merchant be called mad, who should give the direction of his vessel to a young man who had never been at sea, and who knew none of the ropes of the ship ? But is it not greater madness to commit a school to one who knows nothing of the springs of action in the human mind, and who may cause moral shipwreck and destruction to all under his charge ?

But this is a subject so completely set at rest in the mind of every enlightened philanthropist, that it would be a work of supererogation to urge any more considerations upon you.

I will only repeat to you, what I have said to others, that if, instead of the twenty-five teachers who will go out from the Normal School at Lexington, there could go out, over the length and breadth of Massachusetts, five hundred, like them, to take charge of the rising generation, that generation would have more reason to bless us, than if we should

cover the whole State with rail-roads, like a spider's web, and bring physical comforts to every man's door, and leave an overflowing treasury to divide its surplus among all the citizens.

With much respect, truly yours,

SAMUEL G. ROWE.

TO THOMAS A. GREENE, ESQ.

Remarks of Mr. A. W. Dodge of Hamilton, in the House of Representatives, March 13th, 1840, on the Bill for abolishing the Board of Education and the Normal Schools.

Mr. DODGE, of Hamilton, said, that, in opposing the Board of Education, he need not be supposed to be opposing the *cause* of Education. With the same end, gentlemen might differ about the means. The power of this Board appeared harmless ; but, from its unrestrained nature, it was, in fact, dangerous.

He said, that he did not believe in the statement of the Board, that the system of the Common Schools was in a sinking and rotten condition. Did not gentlemen think that children were now better educated in the Common Schools, than when they themselves were boys ?

He thought it idle, to suppose that the Commonwealth, by accepting the donation for the support of Normal Schools, had tied its hands in such a manner, that it could not rescind the bargain. He should refer to the Normal Schools themselves, at another stage of the debate.

He alluded to the Abstract of the School Returns, which had been said to be evidence of the desire of the towns to support the Board. The Secretary was directed to make extracts from the reports of school committees. He could of course extract such portions as advocated the institution and existence of the Board, and reject portions of an opposite bearing : and these extracts were offered to the Legislature as the "unbiassed testimony" of the Commonwealth.

Mr. D. proceeded to argue from the system of *registers* in schools which was introduced by the Board ; and exhibited a blank form, as at first used. This was too large and inconvenient. The Board had since altered it to be smaller and more convenient ; but the *power* to require a still more cumbersome and useless one still remains.

The Board of Education have made an agreement with a publishing house in this city, for the publication of a 'School Library.' School Libraries were very good and useful institutions, and he wished there were more of them ; but what authority did the Board find in the statute for giving their sanction to these books ? There was none. To be sure, the Board say that they do not require, but only *recommend*, the adoption of these books ; but it may be easily seen what a powerful and injurious effect a recommendation even from such a source might have.

Mr. D. made a calculation of the amount which might, on an average, be used for the purpose of supplying libraries, and inquired, whether it were wise that this thirty thousand dollars, which might be used for the necessary purpose of employing teachers, should be exhausted on the merely collateral benefit of supplying books.

From these and other details, said Mr. D., I am induced to say that the Board of Education, by what it has done and what it is preparing to do, has transcended its powers, and is entering upon the greatest innovation upon the Common-School privileges. The Board, he thought, were attempting entirely to *remodel* the school system, and draw it into a similarity to the French and Prussian systems. Were gentlemen prepared for this ?

The powers of the Board looked harmless ; the Board appeared to doubt, occasionally, whether or no, it had this or that power. But it might gradually induce the Legislature to grant it one right after another, until its in-

fluence would be entirely absolute. He compared the organization of the Board to widely-extended police in an absolute government ; where, the magistrates in the small districts being numerous, so that the office being effective, the *officers* might be insignificant, and the registration and returns being all made to one officer, the *centralization* is complete.

Some gentlemen had said that we had better not now stop this experiment ; he (Mr. D.) thought it better to stop it now, than after, by a longer continuance, it had become more thoroughly interwoven with, and injurious to, the school system of Massachusetts.

Remarks of the HON. J. A. SHAW, of Bridgewater, in the House of Representatives, March 18th, 1840, on the Bill for Abolishing the Board of Education and the Normal Schools.

MR. SPEAKER,—Though I regret that such a subject should come before us, as that in which we are now engaged,—for it would seem to indicate that there are persons in the Commonwealth, who are not sufficiently alive to the great interests of Popular Education,—I nevertheless enter on this discussion, animated and cheered by the consideration, that I am engaged not only in a righteous cause, but in a cause free from the enslaving influence of party politics. The question now before us, I rejoice to say, will be decided upon its own merits ; for the cause of Popular Education is dear alike to all, without distinction of party ; to all who hold in just estimation our civil liberties and free institutions. The more attached we are to those institutions of our country, which make no respect of persons among us, the more anxious we shall be to act in accordance with their spirit, by doing whatever we can, to give all the citizens of our State the best opportunities for education. Knowledge, it is truly said, is power. Enlighten the public mind, and the artificial distinctions of society fade away. Give men equal opportunities for mental culture, and you do all that can be done towards equalizing their condition in life. The remark has been too often repeated, and its truth is too obvious to make it necessary to enlarge on it, at this time, that none but an enlightened people can be qualified for a free government. For nothing is more evident, than that they cannot use the elective franchise with any discretion, unless they have knowledge enough to form correct opinions of the leading measures of their rulers.

The Board of Education was established in 1837. It had been apparent, for some time, to the friends of Popular Education, that this great and paramount interest was not advancing in an equal ratio with the other great interests of the country, and that it had become the duty of the Legislature to adopt measures for giving more efficiency to our Common-School system. Their deliberations resulted in the establishment of this Board. It was made their duty, through their Secretary, “to collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the Common Schools and other means of Popular Education ; and diffuse as widely as possible, throughout every part of the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the education of the young ; to the end, that all children in this Commonwealth, who depend upon Common Schools for instruction, may have the best education which those schools can be made to impart.” The Board were not clothed with any authority for dictation, in the management of schools, but each town and district was left untrammelled, to pursue its own course, as in times

(Continued in the Journal Extra.)

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(Concluded from page 240, of the Journal.)

past ; giving just what weight it might choose to do, to any suggestions of the Board. And let me ask, what wiser course could have been devised ? There is no doubt that most beneficial results have already attended their services. A new interest has been awakened throughout the community ; and, in many towns, greater exertions have been made for elevating their public schools, than at any former time.

One of the first charges brought against the Board, by the gentleman from Hamilton, (Mr. Dodge,) who has just taken his seat, is in consequence of their having faithfully discharged their duty of informing the public respecting the condition of our Common Schools. He tells us, that their Secretary does great injustice to the character of our schools in his Annual Reports ; that he has denied them the merit they possess ; that he has, in fact, aspersed them. But, sir, the gentleman has himself done great injustice to the Secretary, by such allegations ; for neither the Board nor their Secretary have said any thing unfavorable respecting our Common Schools, but what their duty required them to say. The statute, as you have just heard, commands them to collect and diffuse information on the subject of our Common Schools ; and what they have told us, they derived from the reports of school committees themselves ; which reports, in all cases, had been accepted by the towns, to which they were made. Not a single unfavorable intimation, respecting the character of our Common Schools or their teachers, is contained in any of the Reports of the Board or their Secretary, that has not been derived from school committees. Had they kept back this information, they would have been false to their trust. But like faithful men, they have preferred to speak the truth, rather than to flatter.

With your permission, sir, I will read two or three extracts, by way of sample, from the Abstract of School Returns, showing what the school committees think, on this subject. The committee of Framingham say, "The want of thoroughly-furnished teachers is the great want of our schools. The public demand, in this respect, is yearly growing louder, and is more particularly attested by the increased liberality with which the labors of competent and skilful teachers are remunerated. The committee are happy in calling to mind the able and generous efforts which have recently been made by the Board of Education, in execution of the will of the Legislature, to meet this demand. The establishment of Normal Schools, for the education of teachers, will be hailed with interest by all the friends of education ; and it is confidently hoped, that an experiment, so auspicious in its promise to the best interests of the Commonwealth, will be fully and generously seconded by the sympathies of the whole community." The committee of Warren say, "There is, in the view of your committee, no defect calling so loudly for reform, as an existing failure in procuring able

and faithful teachers in our winter schools. For, though we have had, here and there, an able instructor of the kind in question, equal to his task, still, it is with regret we say, that there have been several very marked failures." The school committee of Holden say as follows: "The committee feel warranted in saying, that, with but few exceptions, the teachers who have been employed during the year would not, in regard to qualifications, fall below the medium standard of teachers through the country. But, in saying this, they also would say, that, in their opinion, there are but few good teachers to be found." Such remarks as the foregoing are to be found in the reports of committees from all parts of the Commonwealth. These extracts are but a sample of similar opinions expressed from one end of the Volume to the other. Numerous are their complaints respecting the qualifications of teachers, and the Board have communicated this information to the public, as they were bound to do; and this is the only foundation for the charge, that they have slandered the Common Schools. Every man who has acted on a school committee,—and many such now hear me,—knows, from his own observation, that these statements are correct. The Board, by their communications and suggestions, have aroused the attention of the community; and a new interest in the welfare of our schools has been excited; and the benefit of their labors has been acknowledged by other committees, besides that of Framingham. Indeed, the town of Hamilton, represented by the gentleman who has made this attack, is not wholly without benefit. Their school committee says, "I will here take the liberty of mentioning a plan of expending the school money of the town, which I met with in the Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education, and regard as worthy of our consideration."

Does any one believe that our system of Common Schools throughout the State, at large, whatever may be their condition in certain towns, has advanced equally with the improvements of the age? Has there been that interest shown in the communication of knowledge to the youthful mind, and have such facilities been devised for the purpose, as have distinguished the communication of city with city, state with state, nation with nation? While improvements in the manufactures and the arts have been such, as we were told a day or two since, that the price of a yard of cotton has fallen from fifty to eight or ten cents, has any power-loom been contrived to spread out, with equal effect, the native powers of the human mind into one firm, smooth, and finished texture? In classical education, our public schools are not equal to what they were in the days of our forefathers. Nearly two hundred years ago, every town in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, having one hundred families or householders, was required to "set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to instruct youth, so far as they may be fitted for the University." Instead of boasting that our free-school system needs not the aid intended to be given it by the establishment of a Board, it would be well for us to retain unimpaired what our forefathers left us.

Another allegation of the gentleman is, that the Board have transcended their authority, in the establishment of Normal Schools. I will make a bare statement of facts, on this point, and leave it to the calm judgment of this House to decide. The sum of twenty thousand dollars was put at their disposal, "to be drawn upon, from time to time, as needed, and to be disbursed, under the direction of the Board of Education, in qualifying teachers for our Common Schools." The manner of its appropriation was left entirely at their discretion; and they very wisely saw fit to establish three Normal Schools, in different sections of the State, the sole purpose of which is, "to qualify teachers for our Common Schools." They were also required to "render an annual account of the manner in which said moneys have been by them expended." But the gentleman complains, that they have not informed the Legislature of their proceedings, as they were bound to do;

and he at the same time tells us, that he has carefully examined all their Annual Reports. What attention he has paid to the subject, and how carefully he has examined their Reports, you will perceive, when you turn to the seventh page of last year's Report, and read that and the nine following pages. You will perceive that they there mention, in detail, all that they had done and proposed to do, respecting the establishment of these schools ; so that the Legislature last year had an opportunity, before they had expended any of their funds, to interpose, and forbid their further proceedings, if they had seen that the Board were transcending their powers. But who last year ever thought of bringing forward such a charge ? Who had the sagacity to discover, that, when the sum of twenty thousand dollars was set apart, expressly to qualify teachers for our Common Schools, to be expended solely at their discretion, they were transcending their power by establishing schools for the instruction of teachers ? The discovery was reserved for the ingenuity of the gentleman from Hamilton, and his associates.

But, to proceed to another equally grave charge. The Board, it is alleged, have been guilty of the monstrous offence of recommending a School Library of a hundred volumes ! But, before we proceed to examine the nature of this singular crime, it must be said, as of the preceding charge, that the Legislature were fully apprised of their intentions last year, in their Annual Report ; that not a syllable of disapprobation was uttered ; and no individual, so far as I can learn, ever pretended, till recently, that they were transgressing the bounds of their duty. Even could there have been originally a question respecting the propriety of their course, the silence of the Legislature, after having the details of the whole plan, would have encouraged them to go on. But what have the Board done, which some shrewd gentlemen have lately discovered to be a crime, when no one of the five hundred of last year's Legislature suspected any thing wrong ? I cannot better set forth the facts of the case, than by referring to last year's Report, just alluded to.

On the nineteenth page, they say as follows : " By the Act of twelfth of April, 1837, the Legislature has put it in the power of every district in the Commonwealth to possess itself of this blessing, (a School Library,) and the Board regard it as a very interesting part of their duty, to do whatever may be in their power to facilitate the execution of this law. Among the causes, it is supposed, which have hitherto prevented the districts from availing themselves of the authority to commence the formation of these libraries, is the difficulty of making the selection ;—a difficulty of considerable magnitude, when but a small sum is to be expended, and it is necessary to send to some distant place for a supply of books. To remove this obstacle, in some degree, the Board of Education determined, at an early period of the present year, to recommend to some respectable publishing house to issue from the press a collection of works, as a Common-School Library, to consist of two series ; the one adapted for the use of children ; the other, for a maturer class of readers. The proposal has been acceded to by Messrs. Marsh, Capen, and Lyon, of Boston. The enterprise is to be entirely at the expense and risk of the publishers, who agree to execute the works in a style, and to furnish them to those who may choose to become purchasers, at a rate, to be approved by the Board, and which was ascertained to be the lowest, at which an arrangement could be made for its satisfactory execution. Each book in the series is to be submitted to the inspection of every member of the Board ; and no work to be recommended, but on their unanimous approval. Such a recommendation, it was believed, would furnish a sufficient assurance to the public, that a sacred adherence would be had to the principle, which is embodied in the Legislation of the Commonwealth, on the subject of school books, and which provides that ' school committees shall never direct to be purchased, or used in any of the town schools, any books, which are calculated to favor the tenets of any

particular sect of Christians.' It will remain entirely optional, with the school districts, in availing themselves of the authority conferred by the act of twelfth of April, 1837, whether they will purchase the books recommended by the Board. It is by the law left with the discretion of the districts, what rules and regulations may be adopted for establishing and maintaining the libraries authorized to be formed ; and the Board have as little inclination as right to encroach on the exercise of this discretion."

So you perceive, by this extract from their Report, that the Board have been guilty of using their exertions to have a useful law of the Commonwealth carried into effect, in the most efficient manner ; and have, for that purpose, devoted much time to the examination of books, that they might know whether they were in all respects such as ought to be put into the hands of the young ;—and this they have done, without any other compensation than the consciousness of having discharged a duty imposed on them by higher laws than those of man. With the purest motives, they have rendered the public a disinterested and patriotic service, which they could have avoided, had they determined to hold back, and refused to advance a step further than compelled by the penalties of law. But they are not men who so understand their duty. They are not the men to palliate their violation of the spirit of a statute, by pleading that they have complied with the narrowest construction of its letter. Having the sacred interests of the instruction of the rising generation commended to their care by the laws of the Commonwealth, they have generously come forward, and done more, it is true, than could have been demanded of them, but not more than a philanthropic interest in the best good of the youth of our State would dictate ; and for this labor of love they are censured as transgressors. I trust that the members of this House are not such expounders of duty.

You perceive, by the extract just read, that school districts are at perfect liberty to purchase these books, or others, or none at all ; and that no book can be published under recommendation of the Board, till it has received the approbation of every member,—a Board having both political parties represented in it, and containing persons of at least four different denominations of Christians. How could there be a stronger safeguard against every thing like an attempt to thrust upon the public any party or sectarian views ! Among the persons engaged as writers for this series of books, I find, in connection with the names of Judge Story, Jared Sparks, Washington Irving, Dr. Wayland, and others, the names of Robert Rantoul, Jr., A. H. Everett, and Isaac Hill. So cautious have the Board been of interfering with the rights of towns and districts, and the interests of publishers and authors, that they have declined recommending any particular school books, though requested to do so by school committees that represent seven eighths of the inhabitants of the State.

Again, you observed that the gentleman waved before your eyes a certain mysterious sheet, covered over with cabalistic characters, as though it had appeared in judgment against the Board, and was to exert some magic power over the members of the House. And what do you imagine the terrific scroll could be ? It was neither more nor less than a school register ! an account of the absences and tardiness of the children in one of our public schools. The Board were authorized to prescribe a form of register ; and it is charged upon them, that they have laid a grievous burden upon teachers, in requiring them to keep such a one as was shown you. But, sir, every good teacher would keep something of the kind, for his own convenience and satisfaction, did no law require it. I have been many years a teacher of youth, and, with the favor of Providence, expect to be many more ; and it has frequently been my practice to keep a more particular account of my school, than is required by this register, which some have found such a burden. But whatever may have been the objections the first year, last year it was so far altered, as, I believe, to satisfy all.

It is further made an objection, that the Board have sanctioned the publication of so large a document as the Abstract of the Massachusetts School Returns, for 1838-9 ; and the Abstract of some former year, consisting mostly of a few columns of figures, like your bank returns, has been held up to view as "a more business-like document." But who does not know how much more valuable must be such a work as that lately compiled by the Secretary of the Board, with great labor and care, containing extracts from nearly all the reports of school committees in all quarters of the State, than the comparatively meager Abstract which the law formerly required ? We now have the opinions and suggestions of school committees, in their own language, relative to every topic that comes within the province of our Public Schools,—a work of inestimable value to the cause of education.

A formidable objection to the Board is, that their powers are indefinite. But how indefinite is this objection, itself ? The truth is, they have scarcely any power, but the power of recommending what they may think to be for the benefit of our schools ; and they claim no other power. In the language of the statute, they are to diffuse, by means of their Secretary, "as widely as possible, through every part of the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the education of the young." The people are at entire liberty to make what use they choose of the information. Their Secretary is required, by statute, to meet annually, in each county of the State, a convention of such friends of Popular Education as may think fit to assemble, and to avail himself of this means, among others, for giving the required information. What danger there can be in such "indefinite" powers as these, it is not in my power to see.

As to the Normal Schools, we are told that they are not needed ; that our colleges and our academies will supply all the teachers needed by our Public Schools. These institutions, I know, have been of immense benefit. But it was not the object of their establishment to prepare teachers ; and their instructions are not particularly adapted to that end. According to the motto on the arms of Harvard College, "*Christo et Ecclesiae*," its first object was to provide for a learned ministry. In our Normal Schools, instruction is given with a direct reference to the business of instructing others. But the two letters on this subject from distinguished teachers, which are annexed to the Minority Report, are so full and satisfactory, as to the value of such Schools as those at Barre and Lexington, that it is unnecessary to enlarge on this topic.

But, whatever gentlemen may think of the utility of Normal Schools, I did not suppose it possible that any committee of this House could propose a direct violation of so many solemn contracts as is involved in this Bill for the abolition of the Normal Schools. Mr. Dwight's donation of ten thousand dollars was made on condition that the State should add an equal sum,—the whole to be appropriated to the qualification of teachers. The State acceded to his proposal, and was thenceforth bound by the contract. Contracts for three years have been made with instructors, boarding-house keepers, and divers others, who have contributed funds for the establishment of the Schools. All these contracts this bill would at once annihilate. One half hour before the Committee came to this result, I had not the least anticipation of it. It was with the greatest surprise that three of our Committee heard the decision of the majority, consisting of the four other members. And, considering the importance of the measure, it will scarcely be credited, that they came to this result without ever having had this subject more than two hours before them. [Mr. Dodge here interrupted, saying, that the Committee had devoted much more time than two hours to its consideration, namely, a part of their sitting on two different mornings, and the whole of one long evening.] Sir, I am confident that not more time was spent on this subject than I have mentioned. The Committee were togeth-

er on the evening referred to, for the purpose of hearing Mr. Mann, Mr. Rantoul, and others, respecting the utility of school libraries. Our time was occupied till nine o'clock or past, in hearing the opinions of these gentlemen on this latter subject. After completing the business for which we had met, one of our Committee (Mr. Duncan, of Hanover,) asked Mr. Rantoul, what he thought of the proposition, which had been introduced into the House, for abolishing the Board of Education. Mr. R.'s immediate reply was, as nearly as I recollect his words, "that he thought the project a good one, if they wished to abolish education." He then proceeded, in a rather more serious manner, to treat the subject at some length. But I repeat, sir, that the whole time spent in committee, at these three meetings, on the order for abolishing the Board and Normal Schools, did not exceed two hours, whatever may have been said and done by individuals of the Committee, out of doors. I have recently learnt, that certain persons have been for some time past "scattering abroad ambiguous words;" speaking of the aristocratic character of the Board; of centralization, dictation, dangerous tendencies, and the like; but it was with extreme surprise that I found a majority of our Committee were for reporting a bill to abolish the Board and Schools.

I have not remarked upon every thing which fell from the gentleman; but I believe I have noticed his principal arguments in favor of the bill now before us. I have already taken up more time than I could have wished, and feel grateful to the House for the patient hearing they have given me. It is not necessary for me to add more, than express my conviction, that the House will decide justly, upon this question. Had the subject come up a few days ago, I should have feared for the result. The general aspect of opinion was then unfavorable. But my fears have been dissipated. There has been time for reflection and for obtaining information. Truth is mighty; and I feel confident that the House will reject this bill; that they will manifest an undiminished regard for the great interests of public education, for the welfare of the rising generation,—of those children and youth who are dear to us as our own souls.

NORMAL SCHOOLS.

"Those seminaries for training masters are an invaluable gift to mankind, and lead to the indefinite improvement of education. * * *"

"These training seminaries would not only teach the masters the branches of learning and science they are now deficient in, but would teach them what they know far less,—the didactic art,—the mode of imparting the knowledge which they have or may acquire; the best method of training and dealing with children, in all that regards both temper, capacity and habits, and the means of stirring them to exertion and controlling their aberrations."—*Lord Brougham.*

"The best plans of instruction cannot be executed, except by the instrumentality of good teachers; and the state has done nothing for Popular Education if it does not watch, that those, who devote themselves to teaching, be well prepared.

"In order to provide schools with masters, competent and conscientious, the care of their training must not be left to chance; the foundation of Teachers' Seminaries must be continued. I place all my hopes, for the education of the people, in these Seminaries."—*Cousin.*

"The importance of teachers being properly trained, for the work of instruction, is now generally admitted."—*Report of the Borough Road School, London.*

"The method, which obviously suggests itself for giving efficiency to teachers, is the establishment of institutions for their specific education ; or, —to use a name which has already obtained currency,—Normal Schools. It would be only in harmony with the principles which regulate our conduct, with respect to the other professions. Schools and colleges are established for the specific training of surgeons and physicians. * * Students for the bar receive the requisite instruction in the chambers of pleaders or conveyancers. There are military schools, and naval schools, and schools for the fine arts. It seems only filling up a vacant niche in the social edifice, to establish schools for the education of teachers."—*Lalor, the author to whom the Prize of one hundred guineas was awarded, for the best Essay on the expediency and means of elevating the profession of the Educator in society.*

* * * "I therefore recommend a Seminary for the education of teachers."—*De Witt Clinton, Annual Message to the Legislature of New York.*

"The establishment of these Seminaries [Normal Schools] is an object worthy the attention of the Legislature, as a valuable means of laying the sure foundation for supplying all our primary schools with an adequate number of teachers. It is recommended that the work be commenced by dividing the State into a convenient number of Normal-School districts."—*Report for 1840, of the Secretary of State and Superintendent of Common Schools of Pennsylvania.*

"We need an institution for the formation of better teachers ; and, until this step is taken, we can make no important progress. The most crying want in this Commonwealth is the want of accomplished teachers. * * * Without good teaching, a school is but a name. An institution, for training men to train the young, would be a fountain of living waters, sending forth streams to refresh present and future ages."—*Dr. Channing.*

EXTRACTS FROM AN ARTICLE ON NORMAL SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS' SEMINARIES, BY THE REV. CALVIN E. STOWE, D.D., PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IN THE LANE SEMINARY, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

"When the benevolent Franke turned his attention to the subject of popular education in the city of Hamburg, late in the seventeenth century, he soon found that children could not be well taught, without good teachers, and that but few good teachers could be found, unless they were regularly trained for the profession. Impressed with this conviction, he bent all his energies towards the establishment of a Teachers' Seminary, in which he finally succeeded, at Halle, in Prussia, about the year 1704 ; and from this first institution of the kind in Europe, well-qualified teachers were soon spread over all the north of Germany, who prepared the way for that great revolution in public instruction, which has since been so happily accomplished, under the auspices of Frederick William III. and his praise-worthy coadjutors. Every enlightened man, who, since the time of Franke, has in earnest turned his attention to the same subject, has been brought to the same result ; and the recent movements in France, in Scotland, in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Ohio, and other States in the American Union, all attest the very great difficulty, if not entire impossibility, of carrying out an efficient system of public instruction, without seminaries expressly designed for the preparation of teachers.

"Having devoted some attention to this subject, and having spent considerable time in examining institutions of the kind already established in Europe, I propose in this paper to exhibit the result of my investigations. In exhibiting this result, I have thought proper to draw out, somewhat in de-

tail, what I suppose would be the best plan, on the whole, without expecting that all parts of the plan, in the present state of education in our country, will be carried into immediate execution. I propose what I think ought to be aimed at, and what I doubt not will ultimately be attained, if the spirit which is now awake on the subject be not suffered again to sleep.

"The sum of what I propose is contained in the following propositions, namely :

"I. The interests of popular education in each State demand the establishment of a *NORMAL SCHOOL*, that is, a *Teachers' Seminary and Model School*, for the instruction and practice of teachers, in the science of education and the art of teaching.

"II. Pupils should not be received into the *Teachers' Seminary* under sixteen years of age, nor until they are well versed in all the branches usually taught in *Common Schools*.

"III. The *Model School* should comprise the various classes of children usually admitted to the *Common Schools*, and should be subject to the same general discipline and course of study.

"IV. The course of instruction in the *Teachers' Seminary* should include three years, and the pupils be divided into three classes, accordingly.

"V. The senior classes in the *Teachers' Seminary* should be employed, under the immediate instruction of their professors, as instructors in the *Model School*."

"The necessity of specific provision for the education of teachers is proved by the analogy of all other professions and pursuits."

"Such an institution would serve as a standard and model of education throughout the community."

"Such an institution would produce concentration of effort ; its action would possess the vigor which strong sympathies impart ; and it would tend to a desirable uniformity in books and modes of teaching."

"All experience (experience which we generally appeal to as the safest guide in all practical matters) has decided in favor of institutions sustained by government for the education of teachers.

"No country has ever yet obtained a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers in any other way ; while every government, which has adopted this method, and vigorously pursued it, either has already gained the object, or is in the fair way of gaining it, however unpromising the beginnings might have been. No country has ever been so well supplied with competent teachers as Prussia, at the present moment ; and yet, thirty years ago, the mass of school-teachers there was probably below the present average standard of New England and Ohio."

"Now, what has been the great means of effecting so desirable an object in Prussia ? Obviously, and by universal acknowledgment, the establishment of seminaries for the education of teachers. The experiment was commenced by placing one in each of the ten provinces into which the kingdom is divided ; (equivalent to having one in each of the several States of this Union ;) and as their utility was tested, their number was increased ; till now, there are more than forty for a population of fourteen millions. Wirtemberg, Bavaria, Austria, Russia, Holland, France, and all other countries which desire to obtain a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers, find it necessary to follow this example ; and I do not believe the United States are an exception to so general a rule. Indeed, such institutions must be even more necessary for us than for them ; since, from the crowded state of the professions in old countries, there is much greater competition for the appointment of schoolmaster there than here."

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